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Lebanon in Crisis: Urgent Appeal (See Page 15)

A Marvelous Milestone

Andrew Torigian



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COVER PICTURE

The Armenian Evangelical Church of
Beyoglu, Istanbul, established July 1, 1846.
160th anniversary logo designed by
Hagop Janbazian of Toronto, Canada

The year 2006 marks the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. The first Armenian Evangelical Church was established in Pera, in Istanbul Turkey. Just a year and a half later a church was built in Kessab, Syria. The movement spread simultaneously in Historic Armenia and around the world including Lebanon, France, Bulgaria, and as far as the United States. At one time and before the genocide there were over 200 Armenian Evangelical churches in Historic Armenia. Today unfortunately only 2 survive in present Turkey, but there are over 40 churches and fellowships in the Republic of Armenia and more than 60 churches around the world.

In 1918, Armenian Evangelicals in the United States had the great vision to establish the AMAA, as their missionary arm. The churches were excellent in preaching the gospel, but they also recognized the need for outreach beyond their local vicinity. The AMAA fulfilled this vision and also the Great Commission **"Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"**. (Matthew 28:19)

Yes, today we celebrate the 160th Anniversary, which is a milestone. Yet, we realize that the commission goes back to the time when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ sent two of His apostles – Thadeus and Bartholomew to Armenia to sow the seeds of His gospel. Fortunately the seeds **"fell into good soil and when it grew, produced 100 fold"** (Luke 8:8). The growth followed with St. Gregory the Illuminator's influence on King Drtad and the acceptance of Christianity as a national religion. Although the Battle of Avarayr was lost along with Vartan Mamigonian, the resolve was to protect Christianity for the Armenian people, which eventually prevailed. Armenia today thrives as a Christian nation (the only one in the area) with its dedication to the faith of their ancestors. This faith and determination are strong and common to all Armenians including Armenian Evangelicals who also bring their share with their good work.

In Matthew 25:35-37, Jesus said, **"for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when was it that we did that?"** ... 25:40 **"And the king will answer them, Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."**

AMAA is determined to continue to carry on faithfully Christ's Call. In partnership with Armenian Evangelicals worldwide and with the support of our faithful members and friends the AMAA continues to spread the truth of the Gospel and delivers relief, social and educational services including the Orphan/ Child Care, Student Support, Milk Fund, Summer Camp, also drives for food and clothing. AMAA also responds to urgent appeals around the world, like the one for Katrina, or earthquake in Java or the new conflict in Lebanon.

AMAA does exemplify Christ and accomplishes His will wherever we are. □

Predicting The Present

*On the Occasion of the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church**

Peter Kougasian*

I have been asked upon this, the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church, to offer some reflections on the past, present, and future of our evangelical movement, and of our North American Union. In doing so, I am reminded of the observation of the brilliant futurist Marshall McLuhan, who used to say that what he tried to do was to “predict the present.” He said, that if we want to understand what awaits us, we need do no more than seek to understand clearly the currents at work in our own times.

This, I believe, is a Biblical insight as well. The Old Testament tells us of a handful of courageous souls who dared to speak with clarity of the apostasy they saw around them, and of God’s judgment. They were called “prophets,” and although they were pronouncing judgment on the times in which they lived, they did so with such ageless profundity, that today the word “prophet” describes someone who sees into the future.

And so it was that Christ’s contemporaries came to see him as a kind of prophet as well. He spoke of the things around him - of the money changers in the temple, of children being pushed aside by their elders, of a small man climbing a tree - and yet in describing the things immediately around him he spoke truths unto the ages of ages, for, as the old spiritual says, when he spoke to the woman at the well, he spoke to me.

And yes, 160 years ago in Istanbul, a group of 40 restless souls spoke as prophets, when they looked around them, in their own place and time, and declared that their churches were not fulfilling them; that neither liturgy nor tradition was enough to satisfy their spiritual hunger. They were seeking faith, they were seeking celebration, they were seeking answers, they were seeking food for the spirit, and they were seeking it in the present tense. They were not thinking of the distant past, nor were they thinking ahead to our 160th anniversary celebration here in North America. As with all hungry people, their spiritual hunger

was very real and very immediate, and to satisfy it they were willing to risk everything — excommunication, loss of civil rights, even loss of the recognition of their marriages in the churches in which they had been baptized. And so, yes, these people too became prophets, prophets because they understood so clearly what was immediately before them. Let us follow their example, and try to understand our movement by looking around at what we have become.

As a Union, we represent churches that extend from Los Angeles to Montreal, a yawning distance of nearly 2,500 miles - an impressive span, although not nearly as impressive as that of the Evangelical Union of the Near East, which for historical reasons includes a church in Sydney, Australia, 8,821 miles from downtown Beirut!

In our Union there is a church of which I am a member, which today asks whether a city of 7 million people can support a single Armenian Evangelical church; while in Fresno we find a single street upon which rests two vibrant and healthy churches.

Some of us live in a country in which recently the Prime Minister has officially acknowledged the Armenian genocide. Others of us live in a country in which an ambassador can be recalled merely for daring to utter the word.

And of course we are young and old, conservative and liberal. Some of us make pilaf with Carolina Rice and others of us insist on Uncle Ben’s. Many things divide us. But we come together united in one belief: The belief that Princess Diana was Armenian.

That proposition has been proven beyond all doubt (or so it says on a website popular among Armenians!) Certainly, that belief unites us. But some profound things unite us, as well.

We look abroad, and in the Near East we see anxieties unprecedented in nearly a generation. In Beirut, the simple rituals of daily life, even survival itself, are at each

moment in jeopardy. Evangelical schools and churches may soon once again be filled with refugees. And even here in North America, even



amidst affluence, we live in a time of uncertainty and insecurity. Some of us witnessed the World Trade Center burn and fall before our eyes. Some of us have children in the armed services. All of us have endured the searches and the suspicions, and some of us have even known the humiliation of being turned away at a gate or a border.

We worry that any one of our cities could be a victim of terrorism. But we worry, too, about our response to terrorism, as Christians we anguish whenever we are called to fight, we worry — and rightly so — whether our hearts might someday become so hardened that victory and defeat will seem, as Kipling said, “like two imposters, just the same.”

And so we come together, as a Union. We come together for the same reason we come to church, for the same reason Armenians have come to churches since before the day of St. Gregory. We come because when we are alone we feel, in mind and spirit, incomplete.

Here in the New York area, this week was a sad one for many of us. A dear friend of ours, a friend of our family and of our church, passed away. Many of you are acquainted with her whether you realize it or not, because this great lady was the model for one of the characters in that wonderful play by Leslie Ayvazian, *Nine Armenians*.

As we sat at our friend’s bedside, her son articulated movingly something that so many of us have felt, any of us who has lain in a hospital bed, suffering from a serious illness, or who has cared for someone struggling with disease. At some point, even as we marvel at everything that mod-

ern science has provided, we have a sense when we are a patient, of being pulled apart. One doctor, perhaps, reads an x-ray, and another administers the anesthetic so that yet another can perform the operation, and then still another, a resident, removes the stitches. One doctor prescribes an antibiotic while yet another prescribes a pain-killer and at some point you have the sense that no one, no one among them, is treating the person.

We imagine this is a modern syndrome, a symptom of our age of specialization, but it is clearly more than that.

We read in the Bible about a man who had the gift of healing. People, despairing and losing hope, sought him out. His name was Jesus. He healed a man with leprosy. A woman, hemorrhaging and on the verge of death, touched his robe, and she too was healed. A man named Bartimaeus who was blind, who spent his life sitting by the side of the road out of Jericho, begging, cried out to Jesus, and Jesus restored his sight. And to all of these, to three people cured of different maladies in three different times in three different places, Jesus spoke the same words. He said, "Your faith has made you whole."

This was what Christ brought to those around Him. Not simply physical healing, not those treatments of modern medicine that may vanquish an illness, relieve a symptom, and yet leave us feeling dissected and alienated. No, Christ embodied that faith that makes a person whole, that restores the soul. That is why we sometimes refer to Christ as, "The Great Physician."

And so it is that people of faith are so often pilgrims. They are always seeking something. Something, which, alone by themselves, or even among their family or even in their own church, they feel is lacking.

And so it is that we come together to form a Union. We do so not just to debate amendments to by-laws, or to discuss budgets. We come together to experience communion, to be a fitting part of something greater, restored as the body is restored, for as St. Paul told us, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."

So it is, by forming a Union, a North American Union and a Worldwide Evan-

gelical Union, we are restored and made whole, one with another. And at the same time we feel communion with all those who have come before.

And so it is that we come to understand our movement as past, present, and future. For our entire evangelical movement exists in a single moment. Not some moment in the distant past to be revered as neither an anniversary nor some crossroads in the imagined future. It is the only moment that really matters; it is the present moment, it will always be the present moment, it is the moment in which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King found "the fierce urgency of now."

It is in this moment that we will find all that we are seeking, in the same way that the poet found infinity in a grain of sand, and eternity in an hour.

Let us, then, not turn our churches into museums. Let us not preserve our Armenian Christian identity under glass, as though, were it exposed to elements of our modern world, it might dissolve. No, ours is a vital faith. In that faith we will find answers to a world at war. In that faith we will find the courage to confront hunger, and disease. In that faith we find the strength to be good stewards of our churches and of our planet. In that faith we find the models for love of our families, love of our neighbors, and love of our enemies.

All this our faith gives us, now, here in the present moment. And all it asks in return is that we be willing, at every turn, to sacrifice all we have — for it was not ours to begin with.

There is in Armenia a church known as Geghart. Those of you who have visited Armenia have surely seen it; those of you who have never visited Armenia will not believe me when I describe it. For in the year 1215 this church was literally carved into the stone face of a mountain. Chiseled nearly 800 years ago, it must have represented a labor on the order of the construction of the pyramids.

How much easier it would have been, how much more sensible and straightforward, to build a church out of clay or brick or timber! What a strange obsession this church seems to us as we first approach it, rather like a battleship built from matchsticks, or the airplane Howard

Hughes had built out of wood.

But then we, the pilgrims, enter the church, and inevitably someone begins singing a sharagan, and that's when we realize - the acoustics are astonishing. We, as pilgrims, feel as though this chamber within which we stand is the place for which the sharagans had been meant all along. Carving through rock, digging into the unyielding face of a mountain — it all makes sense in the light of a single moment of transcendent celebration of faith.

We as a union face so many problems. We face deficits and empty pulpits and children with soccer games on Sunday morning. We can think of times when we came to the door of our church, and our spirits were hungry, and yet we left without bread. We can recall every slight and offense that has ever been directed our way. And yes, more than once, it has felt as though building a church out of all this, much less building a union, is like striking into a mountaintop with a chisel.

But we will continue to carve, and every time our hammer strikes the chisel once more, it will remind us of Christ, who also took held a hammer, and struck the ground at Holy Etchmiazin, saying, "it is here that you will build my church."

For indeed there are some things about which the Lord gives us perfect knowledge.

I do not expect that one day I will ascend to heaven and learn, at last, that the liberals were right or the conservatives were right or the moderates were right. I do not expect that someday I will know with certainty whether the Lord's Prayer should be translated using the word trespassers or the word debtors. But I do expect one day to have certain knowledge that it is, after all, our faith that makes us whole.

It is that faith that has made of us a Union. It is that faith that has sustained a movement for 160 years, and that sustains us now. It is that faith which has brought us safe this far — and faith will bring us home. □

** Peter Kougasian, Esq. is the Vice President of the AMAA. This speech was delivered at the AEUNA's Biennial Meeting Banquet, on July 1, 2006, which was dedicated to the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church.*

AMAA Acquires Headquarters in Yerevan

Purchase of Former U.S. Embassy Paves Way for AMAA Outreach Throughout Armenia

A major transaction was consummated this past June when the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) purchased the former U.S. Embassy in Armenia from the U.S. State Department.

Plans are already underway to convert the existing buildings into the AMAA central headquarters for all of Armenia, Karabagh, Georgia, and Russia.

Negotiations had been in progress for more than a year and a half when AMAA Executive Director Andrew Torigian made a special trip to Armenia to seal the purchase agreement.

The embassy complex occupies almost an acre of prime land on Baghramian Street. Known also as Embassy Row, Baghramian Street is Yerevan's equivalent of Fifth Avenue.

The office of the President of the Republic of Armenia, Robert Kocharian, is but a few blocks away. Notably, the AMAA has an excellent, well-established rapport with President Kocharian.

Transforming the embassy buildings to AMAA's needs will require considerable effort and cost. For example, an existing auditorium will be redesigned to serve as an Armenian Evangelical church, as well as for secular events. In the meantime, however, it will be the site of a major celebration marking the 160th anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church (1846).

In addition to administrative offices, the complex will house the AMAA Evangelical Theological Academy of Armenia and the Nerses and Arpine Aynilian Medical Center, serving all needy Armenians without charge. Further, the AMAA will administer all of its orphan and needy child support programs, currently serving more than 2,800 children throughout Armenia, plus its milk program which helps nourish over 1,000 infants.

Ample space will be designated for Christian education programs, Bible study, and the coordination of AMAA's many humanitarian projects for Armenia and Karabagh.

Engineering and design are underway. Though no time-line has been set for total completion, the transformation process will move rapidly. Purchase cost and restructuring will add up to significant numbers.

Readers and AMAA supporters have opportunity now to make this great venture personally significant. Above-mentioned areas and offices are available to be named in memory or in honor of family members. Most certainly, all contributions in any amount will be gratefully applied to the completion and utilization of this essential, exciting venture.

Be a part of history in the making. Help bring the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to renew the faith and hope of our people in Armenia. To learn how, please contact Andrew Torigian, AMAA Executive Director, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652, or phone 201-265-2607. □



The newly acquired AMAA Headquarters in Yerevan (above). Andy Torigian, AMAA Executive Director, discussing the final details of the purchase agreement with Lee Hess, Management Officer (center). Lee Hess signing the purchase agreement (below).

Armenian Evangelicals in Turkey Continue to Worship in Two Locations

In 1919 the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) embarked on a major capital campaign to raise half a million dollars to support Armenian Evangelical Churches and Schools in historic Armenia. A pamphlet dated 1919 describes the purpose of this campaign as follows:

“First to rebuild, repair or furnish the church edifices and parochial schools that have been destroyed and robbed during the war. “Second, to secure and send a trained body of pastors and teachers from America to furnish the sorely needed native competent leadership.

“Third to furnish healthy and inspiring literature”.

At the time there were 272 churches and 414 schools which needed to be rebuilt or repaired. Unfortunately, this campaign was not completed as Armenia lost its independence (the first republic of 1918-1920) and the survivors of the genocide who returned to their homes in historic Armenia once again experienced massacres and those who survived were deported.

Out of the existing 272 Armenian Evangelical Churches between 1846 and 1920, today there are only two surviving Armenian Evangelical churches in Istanbul.

AMAA’s Field Director, Dikran Youmshakian, visited Istanbul, Turkey in February of this year and in particular the two surviving churches to assess their needs and to assure them that they are part of the greater Armenian Evangelical family. Both churches are active members of the Union of Armenian Evangelicals Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) headquartered in Beirut, Lebanon. The Armenian Evangelical Church of Pera (the Holy Trinity Church) was founded in 1846 in the Beyoglu area where most Armenians resided. This



The Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Pasha. Seated at the entrance is a volunteer, distributing free bibles and evangelistic tracts.



Worship Service at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Beyoglu.

was the first Armenian Evangelical Church. The church building unfortunately was bombed down and it took years (until 1904) when permission was issued to buy a plot and erect a new sanctuary. The new building was dedicated in 1907.

The church which once had a glorious history of evangelism, unfortunately, today has a dwindling number of parishioners. Nevertheless, the church still continues to serve the community and has visible outreach. At present, Mrs. Sona Eozpembe serves the church as preacher. A dedicated deacon Mr. Ohannes Torkumoglu provides much care and leadership. AMAA supports this church through the UAECNE providing much needed funds for the maintenance and renovation of the building. AMAA also sends Christian literature.

On Sunday, February 26 the Field Director participated in the worship service of the Pera Church preaching in Armenian. His sermon was translated into Turkish. Preaching is always in Turkish, but hymns are all sung in Armenian.

After the worship service at the Pera Church, the Field Director visited the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Pasha to participate in their worship service. The Gedik Pasha Church is very much active with four Sunday worship services. One in the Turkish language for Turkish Christians, one in Turkish for Armenians, one in Armenian for Armenian immigrants from Armenia and one in Persian for the Persian Christian Community. The pastor of the church is Rev. Krikor Agabaloglu. The Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik

Pasha was founded in 1850 as the second church of Istanbul. It first started with worship at homes, until 1854 when a house was purchased. This house, however being old, was only temporary. A property was purchased in 1880, but, permit to build a church was only granted in 1911. Unfortunately, the building project was not completed due to the beginning of the First World War in 1914. Construction was completed in 1950. The church had also an elementary school which unfortunately ceased to operate in 1919 due to lack of funds and also because the authorities refused to permit repairs.

Today this church has a more visible outreach than ever. Christian literature and Bibles are distributed to the public. The pastor preaches two times a week on the

radio. Many Christian converts participate in worship. Children of immigrant families who can not attend or can not afford to attend school, come to church where in one class they learn how to read and write and at the same time learn about the Bible and their Armenian Christian heritage. Thanks to the efforts of the pastor, the church has accomplished much needed renovations. One major and common problem faced by both these churches is the dwindling of the Armenian community in the neighborhood. At one time, these areas were mostly inhabited by Armenians. Most have moved, thus making it hard for the churches to survive.

As we celebrate the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church, let us keep these churches in our prayers. □

Spiritual Corner

Jesus' Promised Peace

by Dikran Youmshakian

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you." (John 14:27).

The promise Jesus made offering His peace certainly excited the disciples and can excite us today. Yet the disciples were soon disappointed as they heard Jesus describe the suffering He would endure on the cross. What kind of peace was Christ talking about?

Today, after 2000 years we continue to feel disappointment as we experience conflicts and hardships. We feel disappointed when we lack peace of mind, when we face disagreements in our relationships. Where is the peace that was promised?

Peace for us is different from what Christ promised. Peace for us is absence of conflict. Peace for us is a quiet and comfortable lifestyle. Peace for us is sound economy and financial stability. Peace for us is to live a worry-free life.

Is this what Jesus promised? If that is the case, then yes, we will be disappointed. We seldom enjoy all these during our pilgrimage in this world.

Jesus promised a peace with a different understanding. He did not promise life with no hardships and worries. Remember, after His promise of peace, Jesus talked about suffering. He also prepared His disciples for difficulties they would encounter as they go to preach His message of peace. Still Jesus promised for a peace and a peace that the world can not offer. It is the peace through the power of the Holy Spirit. A peace which we can enjoy when we receive the Holy Spirit. A peace which will remove fear from our hearts. A peace which will teach us how to handle and endure suffering. A peace which will bring calm and harmony. A peace that will teach us to love our enemies. An inner peace with our God that exists regardless of our circumstances. This is the peace Christ offered and offers to us today.

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil 4:4-7) □

AMAA Shows its Solidarity with Lebanon

More than one million people in Lebanon have been affected by the current crisis, more than 800,000 have been displaced from their homes, over 800 civilians have lost their lives and there are over 3,000 wounded. The destruction of vast areas in Lebanon includes parts of the Capital Beirut, and has expanded to areas to the East and North. The above is just an estimate of the total loss on day 29 of a war imposed on Lebanon. The reality is that the real magnitude of the damage will only appear when the conflict calms down and people try to return to their normal lives.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America once again has shown its solidarity with the people in Lebanon, including the approximately 60 thousand Armenians there. Channeling its relief efforts through the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE), AMAA has already provided much needed help for the current needs and plans through its ongoing efforts to inspire hope for the future.

Rev. Megerdich Karagoezian, President of UAECNE describes the current situation and the Union's relief efforts as follows:

"In the present situation of the crisis in Lebanon, the service of the Church shifted from the usual mode to a war mode. There are hundreds of thousands of people from the southern suburbs of Beirut and the towns and villages of southern Lebanon, Moslem and Christian, who have lost their homes and means of earning their living. These have come to Beirut, Mount Lebanon and all the cities of the North, just to survive the bombing of the Israeli war machine. There are over a hundred of these displaced people in one of our schools, the Armenian Evangelical College, thirty five of them in our Christian Summer Camp up in the mountains, and over 150 of them in a public school right next to our Church in Ashrafieh-Beirut. Our Youth Group has organized a group of over twenty volunteers to help these people cope with the difficulties they face, by giving them what they are in need of. They need food, medication, sanitary facilities, and sleeping facilities,

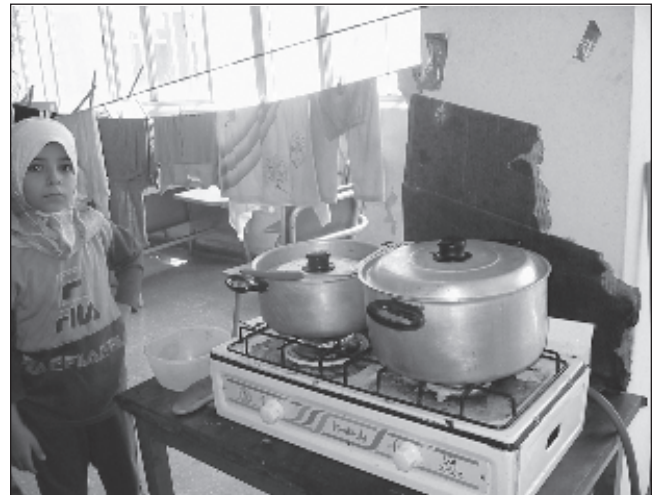


keeping the children focused on childlike entertainment rather than war, and some psychological help. Our main objective is to help these people, our fellow citizens to survive the trauma of the war and, hopefully, to go back to their lives very soon. We try to do that through our service of love and care as Christians, with the cooperation of our Social Action Office.

Out of a total of over one million displaced, we are trying to help only the few who have come to us.

All the churches around Lebanon are doing the same, the bigger churches taking on bigger numbers. Many church members have opened their homes to receive displaced families, and are helping them according to their own financial abilities. The main position of all the Christian Churches is the same: to face the crisis without any discrimination of faith or political difference. We, as the Armenian Evangelical Church, are planning to help more, at the same time thinking of the many families of our Church community, who will very soon be in need of all kinds of help themselves."

In response to AMAA's urgent appeal, so far many concerned individuals, churches



Armenian women in Lebanon in their relief efforts (above). A classroom in the Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut used by Refugees.

and partner organizations have responded with their prayers and donations. All Armenian Evangelical Churches in North America have participated. A major contributor has been Dorcas Aid International of Holland. Immediately after the eruption of this conflict, Dorcas Aid provided 25,000 Euros to help meet the urgent needs. With this amount, much needed aid was provided to displaced families who have found refuge in Armenian Evangelical institutions.

AMAA has also committed to add to its current budget of \$60,000 designated for Lebanon relief in order to help the families affected by the new crisis.

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Armenian Evangelicals to Celebrate 160th Anniversary

Vahan H. Tootikian*

The year 2006 is the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. It marks an important milestone. Armenian Evangelicals can look back with pride and gratitude on the outstanding record of service their Church has rendered to the Armenian nation in religious, cultural, educational, humanitarian, moral and spiritual spheres.

The five church Unions and two organizations that comprise the Armenian Evangelical World Council are celebrating this milestone on local and regional levels, and from Sept. 14 through Sept. 17, 2006 in Yerevan, Armenia.

The 160th Anniversary is an appropriate time to pay tribute to the memory of the pioneers of the Armenian Evangelical Church, to salute those who followed in the footsteps of the nineteenth-century fathers of faith, and kept the torch burning, and to renew their dedication to their Evangelical faith.

During the four-day celebrations, the Evangelical Church of Armenia will play host to hundreds of Armenian Evangelicals who will arrive from different continents of the world, in Yerevan in September 2006. A number of celebratory events have been planned. First, Armenian Evangelical World Council will hold its annual meeting on Thursday morning September 14. Following the Council meeting, the

same afternoon, and from Thursday through Saturday, September 16, an All-Armenian Evangelical Conference will be held. These events will take place in the new facilities of the Evangelical Church, at Baghranian 18, (former U.S. embassy building). The theme of the Conference is "Future Directions of the Armenian Evangelical Church." We plan to have seven sessions, during which the following topics will be discussed.

1. Proclamation of the Word and Armenian Evangelical Worship.
2. Youth and Christian Education in the Armenian Evangelical Church.
3. Bible-centered and Christ-like lifestyle in the Armenian Evangelical Church.
4. Armenian Evangelical Identity: Preservation and Perpetuation of Our Heritage.
5. Future Leadership of the Armenian Evangelical Church.
6. The Witness and Service of the Armenian Evangelical Church: Distinguishing Evangelism from Proselytism.
7. Unity in Armenian Evangelical Church and Ecumenical Relationships.

Fourteen lay and clergy lecturers will present scholarly papers. Leaders of each church Union, Armenian Missionary Association of America and Stephen Philibosian Foundation will submit reports on their respective organizations. In the evenings there will be special artistic and

cultural programs.

On Sunday, September 17, there will be two major celebratory events:

- a. A united 160th Anniversary Sunday Worship Service will be held at the Opera House Hall from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. On this occasion, the ordination of ministerial candidates will be held.
- b. An ecumenical 160th Anniversary celebration will take place in the AUA Hall, from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., under the auspices of the Armenian Evangelical World Council.

On Monday and Tuesday, September 18 and 19, Armenian Evangelical delegation will attend and participate in the Armenia/Diaspora Conference. Also, September 18th to the 26th, the Diasporan representatives will visit the ecclesiastical, cultural and health centers of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, and will do some sightseeing of the motherland.

The purpose of the 160th Anniversary celebrations are:

- a. To bring clergy and lay church leaders together for consultation on the state of the present day Armenian Evangelical Church.
- b. To evaluate, plan, and act upon ways and means of making Armenian Evangelical testimony more biblical and dynamic.
- c. To strengthen the base of the Armenian Evangelical missionary outreach.

By the happiest of circumstances, an auspicious event of great import coincides with the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church: the 15th Anniversary of the Republic of Armenia. The Armenian Evangelical constituency rejoices with the rest of the nation, and on these joyous milestones is reminded that anniversaries are not only appropriate times to honor the past, but also opportune times to claim the future – to look forward to the future with renewed rededication, and to be challenged to greater tasks. □

* Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian is the Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council.

...Cont'd from the previous page

We do realize that the needs in Lebanon will be much more extensive in the coming months. As the rebuilding process begins (which we hope will come soon), much larger amounts will be needed to reconstruct shattered lives. As schools open, there will be great need not only for renovation of buildings but also to help families pay tuition. Before the war, 80 percent of Armenian families with students in schools were not able to pay tuition. That number will approach the 100 percent mark.

There is hope and as Dr. Paul Haidostian, President of Haigazian University states in one of his letters, our answer is always one of hope. "We have suffered many "hot" summers since 1975 and have survived, and we believe we will resume normal activity in due time. Let us remember that what binds us all is neither defined by political agreement, nor common ideology, nor convenience, but by our humbleness and love as undeserving children of God's grace." □

Alexandria, VA -- Gumri, Armenia Sister City Festival



A rainy Saturday morning on June 3, 2006 miraculously changed to a bright sunny day as various Armenian relief organizations gathered at the Alexandria, VA City Hall premises for the Armenian Festival. The festival was organized by the Alexandria – Gumri Sister City Committee.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America participated at the festival with a display of books and promotional material. A display of the AMAA Orphan/Child Care program caught the attention of the hundreds of visitors including the media. AMAA Field Director Dikran Youmshakian addressed the audience challenging those present to visit the AMAA display and support its programs. The proceeds from this festival supports relief projects in Gumri, including the sponsorship of five children through the AMAA. □

76th Synod of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France



The 76th Synod of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in France, hosted by the Armenian Evangelical Church of Valence, was held during May 24-26, 2006. Participating were representatives of ten churches from the regions of Paris, Marseille and Rhone Alpes. Present were also representatives of Espoir Pour L'Armenie, Armenian Evangelical Churches in Belgium, the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Europe, Armenian Evangelical

World Council and the Armenian Missionary Association of America. The programs which included worship service, fellowship, reports, celebration of the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church and elections was a tremendous success. A real concern was the shortage of ministers, resulting in a few pastors to serve more than one church. A highlight was the announcement about the purchase of a new church building for the church in Arnouville - Les Gonesse, north of Paris. Rev. Joe Mikaelian was elected as President for the Union with Rev. Hagop Tchoghandjian, Vice President, Samuel Keheyian, Treasurer and Sarita Dabbo, Secretary. □

AEUNA Holds General Assembly



AMAA Operations Director Al DePaola and Field Director Dikran Youmshakian reporting on the activities of the AMAA during the convention.

Hosted by the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ, the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) held its' 18th Biennial General Assembly June 29-July 2 at the Woodcliff Lake Hilton, Woodcliff Lake, NJ. The event coincided with the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. AEUNA Moderator Rev. Bernard Guekguezian presided over the business meetings.

Three full member churches, The Armenian Church of the Nazarene, Glendale, CA, the Armenian Ararat Evangelical Church of Salt Lake City, UT and the Armenian Evangelical Church of Las Vegas, NV were officially accepted. Three associate member churches also were accepted into the non-voting category. The Armenian Christian Fellowship of Orange County, CA, Armenian Presbyterian Holy Trinity Church of Glendale, CA and the Christ Armenian Church of Glendale, CA.

Reports from member churches, as well as the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada (AMAC), the Stephen Philibosian Foundation, the Merdianian Armenian Evangelical School and the Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center were accepted with appreciation.

Two banquets were held on Saturday evening. One for adults one for the Youth. The keynote speakers for the adult banquets were Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian and Peter Kougasian, Esq.

Rev. Ron Tovmassian was elected as the new moderator with David Hagopian as the vice moderator. □

63rd Annual Convention of the UAECNE Held in Anjar

The 63rd Annual Convention of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) was held in Anjar, Lebanon, July 2-5, 2006. 54 delegates and 28 honorary members from Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Turkey, Greece, Australia and Egypt attended the meetings. The theme of the convention was "Protected by the Grace of God" based on John 7:11 "I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name... so that they may be one as we are one."

Rev. Megerdich Karagoezian, the President of the UAECNE was the main speaker during the opening Worship Service, which was held on Sunday, July 2, at 8:00 pm. Rev. Krikor Youmoushakian was the main speaker during the three morning worship services of the Convention.

Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian was elected as chairman of the meetings. Reports were received from the Officers of the Union, member churches, committees and affiliated organizations and institutions. A request from the Ordination Committee to ordain two Licensed pastors, Mr. Datev Basmajian and Mr. Sevag Trashian was received unanimously.

The Convention concluded its meetings and activities on Wednesday afternoon with a closing Worship Service. The message was delivered by Rev. Nishan Bakalian. □

46th Commencement Ceremonies of Haigazian University



On Friday, June the 30th, 2006, 111 students graduated from Haigazian University. Among a capacity audience, were present Former Minister Wadih El Khazen, representing the President of the Republic of Lebanon, Minister of Administrative Reform, Jean Oghassabian, representing the Prime Minister, MP. Kassem Hachem, representing the House Speaker and the Armenian Ambassador, Vahan Der Ghevontian.

The ceremony started with the procession of Faculty and Graduates, followed by the National Anthem, and the Invocation by the Campus Minister, Rev. Nishan Bakalian. President Haidostian welcomed the audience, and in his trilingual speech, expressed his joy in harvesting a new generation of graduates.

The distinguished guest speaker, Dr. Aram Chobanian, President Emeritus of Boston University, indicated to the students that as they are among the best and brightest of their generation, much will be expected of them.

Valedictorian Tamar Tamoukian, speaking in English, acknowledged how Haigazian University has shaped her life and character, transforming her into a more responsible and self-confident person, and Omar Sukarieh, speaking in Arabic, said that he and his fellow students are on the verge of entering a new episode in their lives.

The class of 2006, threw their caps and walked heads high with a unique recessional, while celebratory balloons flew high in the skies. □

A Meaningful Gift

What would you give a child graduating Kindergarten? Fortunately, there are many options and we are blessed with many gifts. However, most will not last beyond the few days after graduation, especially when the recipient is a young child.



Steven and Karen Nargizian of Franklin Lakes, NJ surprised their son Gregory with a meaningful and unique gift – a child from Armenia, sponsored in his name, through the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA). The picture and the profile of the child, beautifully framed, was presented to Gregory on his graduation from the Kindergarten of Hovnanian Armenian School of New Milford, NJ in June 2006. Gregory's excitement was great. He had received a gift of a long-lasting relationship with a brother in Armenia.

We congratulate little Gregory for his achievement, and his parents, Steven and Karen, for their thoughtful gesture.

You can do the same. You can help a needy child in lieu of a gift. The annual cost to sponsor a child in Armenia is only \$250.00. This will not only save you the trouble of choosing a gift, but will also save a life. Please contact the AMAA at 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652 (Tel. 201.265.2607 – amaa@amaa.org) and make a loving commitment. It will be a gift with real meaning. □

Մերտիներան Վարժարանի Ամապերջի Հանդէսը

Մերտիներան Հայ Աւետարանական Գաղափարաբանի եւ միջնակարգի վկայականներու բաշխման հանդէսը տեղի ունեցաւ Յուլիս 25, 2006-ին, Միացեալ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիին մէջ:

Հոգաբարձութեան որոշումով, յաջորդ կրթական տարե- շրջանէն սկսեալ, Գաղափարաբանէն շրջանավարտ պիտի ըլլան 5-րդ կարգի աշակերտները, իսկ 6-րդ կարգը պիտի միանայ միջնակարգին: Ուստի, այս տարի վկայական կը ստանային 5-րդ, 6-րդ եւ 8-րդ կարգերէն 75 աշակերտները:

Հոգաբարձութեան կողմէ խօսք առաւ Հրայր Աթիքեան, հոգաբարձութեան ատենապետը: Ան շնորհակալութիւն յայտնեց պաշտօնէութեան եւ ուսուցչական կազմին՝ իրենց նուիրումիւ համար եւ խորհուրդ տուաւ շրջանաւարտներուն, որ ըլլան իմաստուն՝ իրենց

Ծառնակութիւնը էջ 13...

Աւետարանչութիւն - Evangelism

Տիգրան Եւովաճեան

«Վեր բռնենք ջահը Աւետարանին,
Լոյս սփռենք համայն խաւար Աշխարհին»

1970-ական թուականներում էր, որ այս երգին բառերը կը լսուէին Նոր Մարաշի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի բակին մէջ, Լիբանան:

Դուրսը կեցող հայ անհատ մը կը հարցներ եկեղեցիին մօտ խանութպանին:

«Ի՞նչ կ'ըլլայ հոս»:

«Զե՞ս լսած - երկու աւետարանիչներ եկած են բողոքականութիւն կը փարոզեն»:

* * * * *

Շատերու համար գիտակցաբար կամ անգիտակցաբար աւետարանչութիւնը կը նշանակէ բողոքականութիւն կամ բողոքականութիւն փարոզել:

Թերեւս իրաւացի պատճառներ կան, նկատի առնելով, որ ընդհանրապէս բողոքական փարոզիչներն են, որ աւետարանչութիւն կ'ընեն: Վկայ հեռատեսիլի աւետարանիչները, որոնք կը փարոզեն հազարաւոր մարդոց: Այս փարոզիչներուն մեծ մեծամասնութիւնը կու գայ բողոքական եկեղեցիի շարքերէն: Շատ քիչ կը հանդիպինք կաթողիկէ եւ կամ օրթոտոքս կղերականի մը, որ հեռատեսիլի վրայ աւետարանչութիւն կ'ընէ:

Այս պատճառով է, որ կարծես աւետարանչութիւնը եղած է բողոքական եկեղեցիին պատասխանատւութիւնը կամ առանձնաշնորհումը:

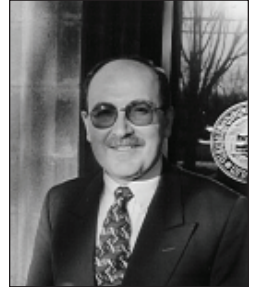
Իրականութիւնը, սակայն, այդպէս չէ: Երբ Յիսուս իր վերջին պատուէրը տուաւ աշակերտներուն, ըսաւ. - «Գացէ՛ք, աշակերտեցէ՛ք բոլոր ազգերը, մկրտեցէ՛ք զանոնք Հօր, Որդիին եւ Սուրբ Հոգիին անունով: Սորվեցուցէ՛ք անոնց պահել ամէն ինչ, որ պատուիրեցի ձեզի» (Մատթ. 28. 19-20), աշակերտները պարզ մարդիկ էին, ոչ մէկ յարանուանական հակումով: Անոնք բողոքական չէին եւ տակաւին ո'չ ալ ֆրիստոնեայ, եւ ո'չ ալ ունէին իրենց ձեռքերուն մէջ Աւետարանը: Անոնք աւետարանիչներ ալ չէին:

Յիսուս պատուէր տուաւ անոնց երթալու եւ բոլոր ազգերը աշակերտելու:

Յիսուսի խաչելութենէն եւ յաղթական յարութենէն ետք է, որ ֆրիստոնէութիւնը ընթացք առաւ, երբ մարդիկ հաւատացին Քրիստոսի Յարութեան, երբ անոնք փորձառութիւնը ունեցան տեսնելու Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսը եւ մանաւանդ երբ անոնք լեցուցան Սուրբ Հոգիով:

Այն ատեն է, որ հիմնուեցաւ Քրիստոսի Եկեղեցին, եւ այդ օրէն ետք է, որ սկսաւ Աւետարանչական արշարը:

Աւետարանչութիւնը Աստուծոյ Խօսքը հռչակել է, եւ իւրաքանչիւր ֆրիստոնեայ կանչուած է աւետարանչութեան: Հակառակ այս իրականութեան, եւ մանաւանդ այսօր, քիչեր կը շեշտեն աւետարանչութիւնը: Ընդհակառակը, երբ աւետարանիչներ կը յանդգնին փարոզել, եւ երբ Հայ Աւետարանականներ կը փարոզեն Աստուծոյ Խօսքը, անոնք երբեմն անտեղի կը մեղադրուին որպէս դաւանափոխներ:



Աւետարանչութիւնը Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիին համար մեղադրական առարկայ կ'ըլլայ թերեւս այն պարզ հասկացողութեամբ, թէ Հայ Ժողովուրդը արդէն իսկ Քրիստոնեայ ազգ է, եւ աւելին, առաջին ազգն է, որ ընդունած է ֆրիստոնէութիւնը: Եւ երբ Հայ Աւետարանականներ կը փարոզեն Աստուծոյ Խօսքը, անմիջապէս կը մեղադրուին ըսելով, թէ եկած են «յափշտակելու ոչխարները»:

Այս մեղադրանքը անտեղի է: Բաղդատական մը կարելի է ընել այս կապակցութեամբ:

Արեւմուտքի մէջ, օրինակի համար, ուր ընդհանրապէս ֆրիստոնէութիւնը մեծ մեծամասնութիւն է, սերտողութիւններ ցոյց կու տան, թէ ֆրիստոնեաներուն բացարձակ մեծամասնութիւնը եկեղեցի չեն յանձնար: Եւ այս, հակառակ հետեւեալ տուեալներուն, թէ ֆրիստոնեաներու

65 առ հարիւրը կը հաւատայ, թէ Սուրբ Գիրքը Աստուծոյ Խօսքն է

77 առ հարիւրը կ'աղօթէ

72 առ հարիւրը կը հաւատայ՝ թէ Յիսուս Աստուծոյ Որդին է,

եւ մանաւանդ, թէ

58 առ հարիւրը եկեղեցի պիտի երթայ, եթէ իրեն յարմար եկեղեցի մը գտնէ:

Այս տուեալները ցոյց կու տան, թէ աւետարանչական մեծ գործ կայ Արեւմուտքի մէջ, եւ արդ աւետարանիչներ կը պատգամեն մեծ սրահներու եւ նոյնիսկ մարգարաշտերու մէջ:

Արդեօք անոնք մեղադրուելու են որպէս դաւանափոխներ:

Պարագան նոյնն է նաեւ մեր Ժողովուրդին համար, ըլլան հայրենիքի մէջ կամ ի սփիւռս աշխարհի: Տուեալները ցոյց կու տան, որ մեր այս առաջին ֆրիստոնեայ ազգի զաւակներէն մեծ մեծամասնութիւնը տակաւին սերտած չէ եւ լսած չէ

Աւետարանի նշմարտութիւնը, եւ մանաւանդ չունի փրկութեան փորձառութիւնը: Հայ եկեղեցիին ու եկեղեցիներուն, եկեղեցականներուն եւ բոլոր հաւատացեալներուն պարտականութիւնն է Աստուծոյ խօսքին Բարի Լուրը փոխանցել բոլորին:

Թող երբեմն մարդիկ մեղադրեն, սակայն հակառակ պարագայի չըլլայ, որ Քրիստոս մեզ մեղադրէ իր պատուէրին անհաւատարիմ գտնուելուն համար:

Աւետարանչութիւնը քրիստոնէական պատուէր է, ո՛չ Բողոքական, ո՛չ Կաթողիկէ, եւ ո՛չ ալ Առաքելական: Քրիստոնէական եւ անխոր:

Պօղոս Առաքեալ Ա. Կորնթացիս 9. 16 համարին մէջ, կ'ըսէ.- «Վա՛յ է ինծի եթէ չաւետարանեմ»:

* * * * *

Աւետարանչութիւնը կը հիմնուի նաեւ հետեւեալ սկզբունքներուն վրայ.-

1) Աւետարանչութիւնը խնդրանք մը չէ, այլ պատուիրանք մը Քրիստոսի կողմէ ուղղուած բոլորին:

2) Աւետարանչութիւնը Աստուծոյ խօսքը փարօղել է, հիմնուելով Աւետարանի սկզբունքներուն վրայ:

3) Աստուծոյ խօսքին փարօղութեան ընկերակցելու է մարդկային խնամք, գործունեութիւն եւ սէր:

4) Աւետարանչութիւնը մեր պարտականութիւնն է: Աւետարանչութիւնը մենք կ'ընենք, սակայն արդիւնքը կը մնայ Աստուծոյ ձեռքերուն մէջ:

Աւետարանը կը փարօղուի, որպէսզի մարդիկ հասկնան նշմարտութիւնը: Աւետարանը կը փարօղուի եւ պէտք է, որ փարօղուի ո՛չ փառափառ մղիչ պատճառներով: Ո՛չ ժողովուրդը մէկ եկեղեցիէն միւսը յափշտակելու համար: Այլ, որպէսզի անհատը մօտենայ Քրիստոսի եւ ընդունի Քրիստոսը, որպէս իր միակ Փրկիչը: Ուրիշ նպատակ չի կրնար ըլլալ: Քրիստոսը որպէս Փրկիչ ընդունիլ անպայման չի նշանակեր դառնալ Բողոքական կամ Աւետարանական: Անհատը կրնայ Քրիստոսը ընդունիլ իր եկեղեցիին մէջ: Աւետարանչութիւնը դաւանափոխութեամբ չի պայմանաւորուիր: Աւետարանչութիւնը կը մղուի հոգեփոխութեամբ:

Ձգայուն այս կէտին մէջ, թէ՛ մարդիկ եւ թէ՛ աւետարանիչներ զգոյշ ըլլալու են:

Աւետարանչութիւնը կը մղուի քրիստոնէական մեծ պատուէրով:

Աւետարանչութեան մղիչ ոյժը Քրիստոս է, մեր Տէրն ու Փրկիչը: Ի՛նք ուրիշներէ եղաւ աւետարանչութեան: Յիսուսի աւետարանչութեան մէկ գեղեցիկ օրինակը կը գտնենք Սամարացի կնոջ հետ զրոյցի ընթացքին: Յիսուս Սամարացի կնոջ խօսեցաւ Կենաց Ջուրի մասին, եւ երբեք չ'ենթադրեց փոխել անոր դաւանանքը:

Աւետարանչութիւնը կը մղուի Աստուծոյ սէրէն: Աւետարանչութիւնը Քրիստոսի առաքելութեան շարունակականութիւնն է, եւ ցոյց տալու է Քրիստոսի սէրը գործնական ձեւով:

Քլիմքըն Մ. Մարշ, իր “Evangelism Is...” (Աւետարանչութիւնը է...) գիրքին մէջ, այսպէս կը բացատրէ Աւետարանչութեան կապը Աստուծոյ սիրոյն հետ.- Աւետարանչութեան նպատակը մարդիկ Քրիստոսի եւ եկեղեցիին մօտեցնել է: Աւետարանչութիւնը կը յաջողի, երբ մարդիկ անդամակցին եկեղեցիին, սակայն եկեղեցիի անդամակցութիւնը պայման չէ աւետարանչութեան: Աւետարանչութիւնը կը նշանակէ փոխանցել Աստուծոյ սէրը մէկ անհատէն՝ միւսին:

Հայ Աւետարանական եկեղեցին, իր 160րդ տարւումն առիթով, հաւատարիմ մնալով քրիստոնէական պատուէրին, յատկապէս այսօր շեշտելու է աւետարանչութիւնը՝ փարօղելով Աստուծոյ խօսքը եւ սփռելով զայն խաւար աշխարհին: Աշխարհ ա՛յսօր պէտք ունի խօսքին փարօղութեան, որեւէ տեսնէ աւելի: □

Մերտինեան..... Շարունակուած էջ 11-էն

շուրջը եւ աշխարհին սէր ու խաղաղութիւն բերելու:

Օրումն հիւր պատգամաբերն էր Պրն. Ծօրն Ֆիլիպս, Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան փոխ-նախագահը: Իր խօսքին մէջ, ան թելադրեց աշակերտներուն չվարանիլ իրենց ստացած ուղղութեան մէջ, չհետեւիլ ամբոխին, դրական կեցուածք ունենալ, եկեղեցիէն չհեռանալ, արժանապատուութիւն ունենալ, ստեղծագործ եւ լաւ քաղաքացիներ ըլլալ, չմոռնալ իրենց նախաֆայրերուն զոհողութիւնները եւ օգնել հայրութեան: Ան իր խօսքը վերջացուց ըսելով. «Մենք գոյատեւեցինք եւ գերազանցեցինք: Գացէ՛ք եւ օրինակ եղէք ուրիշներուն եւ պիտի կարողանաք մեր առաքելութիւնը շարունակել՝ Աստուծոյ հաւատարմով եւ Անոր օգնութեամբ»:

Վկայականներու բաշխման հանդիսութենէն ետք, շրջանաւարտները ներկայացուցին գեղարուեստական կոկիկ յայտագիր մը: Ապա, խօսք առաւ դպրոցի տնօրէն՝ Պրն. Յովսէփ Ինճէճիքեան: Ան նախ շնորհաւորեց շրջանաւարտները, ապա շնորհակալութիւն յայտնեց Մերտինեան մեծ ընտանիքին, հոգաբարձութեան, ուսուցչական կազմին, պաշտօնէութեան, ծնողա-ուսուցչական կազմին եւ Տիկնանց Օժանդակ Մարմինին:



Rev. Ara & Mrs. Valia Ochinian

Rev. Ara was born in 1968 in Stepanavan, Armenia. In 1986 he was accepted at the Engineering Institute of Yerevan University. He served in the army for three years (1987-89). After completing his military service, he continued his education and graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering.

Rev. Ara accepted Christ and dedicated his life to the church. He studied for the ministry at the Evangelical Theological Academy in Armenia. He graduated and was ordained to be the full time pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Stepanavan. Rev. Ara was married to Valia Hmayagian and they have two young children.

On Saturday, August 12, while driving on the Yerevan-Vanadzor highway, a truck, pulling a fuel tank, suddenly exploded. The fuel tank separated from the truck and struck three cars. All three cars were set on fire and nine passengers were severely burned and rushed to a trauma center in Yerevan. Drivers of two of the cars, including Rev. Ara, died in the hospital the same day. Mrs. Ochinian, who was also in the car, was hospitalized with severe burns. Unfortunately she did not survive and passed away three days later.

The AMAA and the Armenian Evangelical Churches worldwide, mourn the death of their brother and sister in Christ and pray for their families, specially for their two little children. □

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... They will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them. (Rev.14:13)

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends whose names were submitted to us for publication in the AMAA News

- * **Ethel Arakelian**
Danvers, MA
- * **Robert Anthony Dadaian**
Glendora, NY
- * **Hagop Farhadian**
Lawrence, MA
- * **Gary Sarkisian**
Brockton, MA
- * **Jema Telfeyan**
Manhasset, NY
- * **Nellie Voskeritchian**
Monrovia, CA

* Memorials designated for AMAA



Vahan Darakjian

Vahan was born in Alexandrette (Iskenderoun), Turkey on Sept. 11, 1922 to Nazareth and Arousiag Darakjian. He was the third of five sons: Mesrob (deceased in 1976), Emmanuel, Vahan, Sarkis, and Barkev.

Following the untimely death of their father, the five young boys and their mother settled in Aleppo, Syria. Although they grew up in poverty, Vahan and his brothers greatly valued education and pursued higher learning despite many obstacles. Vahan had a special fondness for languages. He became fluent in Armenian, English, French, Arabic, and Turkish.

In Aleppo, Vahan worked for twenty years as a teacher of English to high school and college students. In addition to teaching, he owned a bookshop in Aleppo where he sold English and French books. He was active in the Bethel and Emmanuel Evangelical churches in Aleppo, where he sang in the choir. He also served as a trustee for the Emmanuel Elementary School.

In 1954, Vahan married Rosine, the daughter of Nazar and Alice Nazarian. Throughout their marriage of 51 years, Vahan felt great affection for Rosine's parents and her siblings. Vahan and Rosine had four children: Arda, Aline, Rubina, and Raffi. Vahan was a loving and devoted husband and father.

After immigrating to the United States in 1969, he worked in carpet sales until his retirement. Following retirement, he once again joined the church choir, this time at Immanuel Church in Downey. He spent his retirement years reading, listening to music, cooking, and entertaining frequent guests. He was happy to see his children marry and he was very fond of his sons-in-law Carl, Dallas, and Chris, and his daughter-in-law Blanca. He also loved spending time with his grandchildren: Spenser Alishan, Marlowe Shiraz, and Constance (Arda's sons and stepdaughter), Justina Sevan (Aline's daughter), and Sean Armen (Rubina's son).

Vahan passed away in Whittier, CA on June 1, 2006 at age 83. Funeral services were held on June 10. Donations in lieu of flowers were given to the Immanuel Church and to the AMAA's Orphan and Child Care Fund for the children of Armenia.

Vahan's great passion in life was music - especially opera and choral works - and he often said he hoped to meet Mozart in the afterlife. We hope they are together now, listening to "The Magic Flute." □



Ովսաննա Վասոյեան Մելքոնեան

Ովսաննա ծնած է Հալէպ, 22 Յուլիս 1922-ին, Նազարէթ եւ Լուսին Վասոյեան ընտանիքին մէջ: Մեծ Եղեռնէն մազապործ ազատած սերունդի ներկայացուցիչներէն է ան, որ ծնաւ ու հասակ առաւ



այդ պայմաններուն մէջ: «Մանկութիւն չունեցող» այս սերունդը, բնականաբար առիթը չունեցաւ բարձրաստիճան ուսման հետեւելու, եւ Ովսաննան բացառութիւն չէր:

Կեանքի պարագաները արգելք եղան, որ նոյնիսկ իր նախակրթարանի ուսումը աւարտէ, հակառակ անոր, որ փայլուն եւ ուշիմ աշակերտ մըն էր: Ուսուցիչները աշխատանք տարին, որ շարունակէ իր ուսումը, սակայն ամէն փորձ ապարդիւն մնաց:

Ովսաննայի հաւատացեալ ծնողները եւ անոր մայրապետ քոյրը մեծ ազդեցութիւն ձգեցին Ովսաննայի նկարագրի կերտումին եւ կեանքի փիլիսոփայութեան կազմաւորումին: Հետեւաբար, անորամաբանական փափաք մը չէր, որ նախակրթարան չաւարտող աղջիկ մը ուզէր մայրապետ ըլլալ: Ըստ երեւոյթին, մայրապետ ըլլալն ալ Աստուծոյ ծրագրին մէջ չէր: Ան չընդունուեցաւ Կաթողիկէ համայնքէն մայրապետ ըլլալ իր «մեծ» տարիք ունենալուն համար...:

Մայրապետ չըլլալը, սակայն, չուսահատեցուց զինք իր հաւատքէն կամ նուիրումէն: Ան շարունակեց ծառայել Աստուծոյ իր եկեղեցիին մէջ զանազան գործունէութիւններու պատասխանատուութիւն ստանձնելով, յատկապէս Կիրակնօրեայ Դպրոցին օգնելով որպէս ուսուցչուհի: Տարիներու Կիրակնօրեայ Դպրոցի ուսուցչութեան ընթացքին հանդիպեցաւ Մելքոն Մելքոնեանին, որ ինքն ալ նոյն Կիրակնօրեայ Դպրոցին ուսուցիչներէն էր: 27 Նոյ. 1942-ին ամուսնացան եւ Աստուած օրհնեց իրենց ընտանիքը երեք զաւակներով՝ Գոհար, Սեդա եւ Սկրտիշ:

Սփիւռքի կեանքին եւ պանդուխտ Հայուն մէկ փորձառութիւնը ապրեցաւ Ովսաննան: Զաւակները իրենց երկրորդական ուսումէն ետք տունէն հեռանալով Լիբանան եւ մինչեւ Միացեալ Նահանգներ փոխադրուեցան: Ովսաննան ալ, իր ամուսնոյն հետ, քանի մը անգամներ Միացեալ Նահանգներ այցելելէ ետք, 28 Ապրիլ 2000-ին հաստատուեցան Լոս Անճելէս: Եկեղեցիին եւ համայնքին մէջ հիւրապիւրութեամբ հանրածանօթ Ովսաննան իր աչքերը փակեց Չորեքշաբթի, 21 Յունիս 2006-ին, եւ միացաւ իր Փրկիչին՝ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի, որուն նուիրած էր իր ամբողջ կեանքն ու խորհուրդները: Թող Աստուած անոր յիշատակը օրհնութիւն մը դարձնէ: □

LEBANON IN CRISIS: AMAA APPEALS FOR YOUR HELP

A cease-fire has been reached after 33 days of fierce fighting, and we pray that it will hold. However, as civilians return to their homes in war-ravaged areas, they will face a harsh reality. Not only roads, bridges and power stations are destroyed, but in many instances entire neighborhoods have disappeared. Many will remain homeless for the months to come.

The Central Committee of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) is considering the social aspect of the country and the long-term needs created by the war. There is concern that many of the thousands of refugees who have found shelter elsewhere (including those housed at the Armenian Evangelical College and in KCHAG Summer Conference Center), will be unable to return home. They will continue to need our assistance. Those who return will need much aid to reconstruct their homes. Thousands of people will start from scratch.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) will continue its relief efforts towards Lebanon showing its solidarity with the people there. We, therefore, urge you to continue to pray for a final and peaceful settlement along with your prayers for the cease-fire to hold, and appeal to you to participate in the much needed relief efforts with your generous gifts. The AMAA office will continue to follow up with the events in Lebanon and will update our members and friends about the progress made. AMAA will also appreciate your continued support. Let us help our brothers and sisters rebuild their shattered lives and thus rebuild Lebanon. Thank you.

Please send your gifts through the mail using the coupon attached, or through your credit cards calling (201) 265-2607.



In the capital, Beirut, people ventured into the bomb-ravaged southern suburbs.

Yes, I would like to respond to the AMAA's appeal to help our brothers and sisters in Lebanon.

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

(Please make your tax-deductible donations payable to AMAA for Lebanon Relief and mail to 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652)

For donations with a Credit Card, please contact the AMAA Office at 201-265-2607

OFFICIAL CALL TO THE 87th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Eighty Seventh Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. (AMAA), will be held on Saturday, October 14, 2006, at 9:30 a.m. at the AMAA Headquarters, 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ. All members of the AMAA are invited to attend the meeting to:

- I. Consider and approve the reports of the Officers, Committees, Chapters, and Affiliated boards of the Association for fiscal 2005-2006;
- II. Review the financial reports for fiscal 2005-2006;
- III. Announce the results of the elected eight Board members to replace those whose terms have expired;
- IV. Elect four members to the Nominating Committee;
- V. Elect an Auditor;
- VI. Consider and act upon any other business that may legitimately come before the membership.

PROGRAM OF THE 87th ANNUAL MEETING ACTIVITIES

Friday, October 13 at AMAA Headquarters, Paramus, NJ

9:00 a.m.....AEWC Meeting

2:00 p.m.....SEMINAR

1. The contribution of the Armenian Evangelical Church to the Armenian Nation from a different perspective focusing on education - Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian
2. The Armenian Church Where is it headed? - Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian

7:00 p.m.....AMAA Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday, October 14 at AMAA Headquarters, Paramus, NJ

9:30 a.m.....87TH ANNUAL MEETING

2:00 p.m.....AMAA Board of Directors Meeting (Short Session)

Saturday, October 14

6:30 p.m.....BANQUET Celebrating the 160th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church and honoring
..... past presidents

Sunday, October 15 at Armenian Presbyterian Church, Paramus, NJ

11:00 a.m.....87TH Annual Meeting Worship Service and Installation of AMAA Officers

As members of the AMAA world-wide family, we look forward to this annual gathering to renew our ties of fellowship as Armenian Evangelical churches and communities, and to strengthen our common mission around the world. With joy we eagerly anticipate your presence and participation.

Armenian Missionary Association of America

31 West Century Road
Paramus, NJ 07652

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